

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action mailed on May 4, 2006. Claims 1-16 and 32-36 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1 and 32 have been amended. Claims 11-16 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claim 37 has been added. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is submitted with this response. No new matter has been added by this response.

Claims 1-10 and 32-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,642,483 to Luciano et al. ("Luciano") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,093,861 to Graham ("Graham"). Applicants disagree with and traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms where each lock mechanism is associated with one of the plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine. Each lock mechanism is physically movable between unlocked and locked conditions with respect to its associated area. The apparatus includes control circuitry which is independent of the gaming machine that includes a processor operating under control of a stored program. The control circuitry is coupled to each of the lock mechanisms via a communications link for controlling the operation of the lock mechanisms. The apparatus includes a data storage and retrieval system adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing data including personal identification data and access authorization data indicative of the physical areas, if any, of the machine for which a person seeking access to the machine

is authorized. The apparatus also includes a data input device connected to the gaming machine which is coupled to the processor for inputting at least personal identification data identifying a person seeking access to physical areas of the machine. The processor is responsive to the inputted personnel identification data for operating the lock mechanisms in accordance with access authorization corresponding to an unidentified person. The storage media storing personnel identification data that authorizes access by certain identified personnel to a plurality, but not all, of the physical areas. The processor causes the lock mechanisms of the physical areas to which access is authorized to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those physical areas.

Applicants submit that the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 1.

Luciano teaches a plurality of electrically, individually operable locks associated with areas of gaming machines. However, *Luciano* does not teach or suggest how the locks operate. The Patent Office, therefore, relies on *Graham* to remedy the deficiencies of *Luciano*.

Graham discloses an access control system 50 which includes a strike control relay 51 responsive to control signals from a microprocessor 45 to control the opening and closing of an access device, such as a lock or a striker. *Graham* discloses that an access code must be inputted or entered at each access device to open or unlock that access device. *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest that such a control system can be employed to open or close multiple access devices or locks where a processor unlocks the lock mechanisms of a plurality of access devices of a gaming machine or

other location based on personnel identification data inputted at that gaming machine or location.

The Patent Office states that *Graham* teaches or suggests controlling the operation of a plurality of locks. The Patent Office provides the following statement from *Graham* as support that *Graham* can be used to control a plurality of locks.

While the preferred application of the present invention has been shown and described, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that many more modifications are possible without departing from the invention concept herein described. (Col. 7, lines 19-23).

Applicants submit that such a broad statement cannot be relied on to teach or suggest the operation of a plurality of locks or any other modification where such teachings are not suggested in the prior art references themselves.

Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either explicitly or implicitly in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Kotzab*, 55 U.S.P.Q.2d 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000). “[T]he mere fact that the prior art could be so modified would not have made the modification obvious unless the prior art suggested the desirability of the modification.” *In re Laskowski et. al.*, 10 U.S.P.Q.2d 1397, 1398, (Fed. Cir. 1989), citing, *In re Gordon*, 221 U.S.P.Q. 1125, 1127 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

Graham does not disclose, teach or suggest that its system can be used to operate or control a plurality of locks at a hotel or any other location based on identification information inputted by a user at an access device. Although *Graham* describes controlling access devices at a plurality of hotels, *Graham* does not disclose

or suggest that a plurality of access devices or locks are opened based on personnel identification data entered at one of the access devices or locks. Instead, *Graham* discloses that the personnel identification data must be entered for each access device or lock to open that access device or lock.

Furthermore, *Graham* specifically discloses that security is a significant issue at hotels and offices by stating the following:

For an access control system sold to different purchasers, such as different hotels or offices, if the pin codes for the same available user numbers at different hotels or offices are the same, the security of each of the hotels or offices equipped with such a system may be compromised because the users assigned with the same user number at different hotels or offices may gain access into more than one hotel or office by also using the same pin code number. (Col. 1, lines 26-35).

Based on the same reasoning, if a plurality of access devices or locks were able to be opened or unlocked based on personnel identification data entered at one of the access devices, there would be significant security issues because unauthorized persons could access rooms having locks which were opened but not occupied by authorized personnel. As stated above, *Graham* teaches a system which is aimed at preventing such breaches of security. Therefore, *Graham* teaches away from unlocking a plurality of access devices based on inputted identification information as disclosed by the claimed invention.

Moreover, neither *Luciano* nor *Graham* disclose, teach or suggest a control system or a processor which is remotely located from or independent of a gaming machine and which controls the operation of a plurality of access devices such as locks associated with the physical areas of a gaming machine or gaming machines. As

stated above, *Luciano* discloses mechanical locks which are each physically manipulated by a user having authorized access to the physical areas of the gaming machine. In an alternative embodiment, *Luciano* discloses that electronic locks having a code could be used. However, the electronic locks disclosed by *Luciano* would still have to be individually and independently manipulated by an authorized person to open each lock.

Graham discloses a microcontroller or microprocessor 45 which controls the opening and closing of an access device such as an electric lock or door striker. The microcontroller 45 is coupled to input devices such as a keyboard 46 or an optional card reader 47 to control the strike control relay 51 which is also coupled to the microcontroller. As shown in Fig. 3, the system is directed to systems such as access keypads positioned adjacent to a security door to gain access to that security door. As stated above, *Graham* discloses that its system is used to control access to each access device or door individually or separately based on personnel data entered at each door. There is absolutely nothing in *Graham* which describes operating or controlling a plurality of locks based on data entered at a single gaming machine, access device, door or other location.

For at least these reasons, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham*, does not disclose, teach or suggest an apparatus for remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine including a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms which are unlocked by a processor that is independent of the gaming machine to allow access to those physical areas of the gaming machine by an authorized person.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended claim 1 and claims 2-8 and 10, which depend from claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is directed to a method of remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of different physical areas of a gaming machine. Claim 32 includes similar elements to amended claim 1. Therefore, for the same reasons provided above for amended claim 1, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 32. Therefore, claim 32 and claims 33-36, which depend from claim 32, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

New claim 37 includes similar elements to amended claims 1 and 32 and further includes that the apparatus remotely controls access to at least one physical area on each of a plurality of gaming machines where "the processor causes the lock mechanisms of the physical areas of the gaming machines to which access is authorized to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those physical areas" based on inputted personnel identification data.

Neither *Luciano* nor *Graham* disclose or suggest a processor which unlocks one or more lock mechanisms on each of a plurality of gaming machines based on inputted personnel identification data. As stated above, *Luciano* teaches the manual opening of each lock mechanism of a gaming machine by using a physical key or an electronic code. *Graham* teaches controlling the opening and closing of an access device based on inputted data but does not disclose or suggest opening or closing a plurality of access devices based on that data or access devices at different locations based on

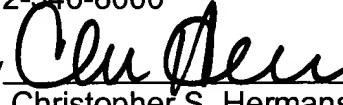
that data. Instead, Graham requires that the data be inputted at each access device and controls access to those access devices separately.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1-8, 10, 32-36 and new claim 37 are patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants request that claims 1-8, 10 and 32-37 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

A check in the amount of \$790.00 is submitted herewith to cover the fee for the RCE. If any other fees are due in connection with this application, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (25814-403120) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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